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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001353

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: NEPAL: KING OFFERS VIEWS AT AMBASSADOR'S CREDENTIALS CEREMONY

REF: A. STATE 82853

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 1097

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty; Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In a 20-minute one-on-one after I presented my credentials on July 16, Nepal's King Gyanendra told me that he wanted to be a constitutional monarch, and would take a "hands-off" approach now that Prime Minister Deuba had formed a government. The King described ongoing U.S. assistance to Nepal as "invaluable." While unsure whether it was time for negotiations with the Maoists, the King promised to keep us informed of any major shifts in policy. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) After presenting my credentials to Nepal's King Gyanendra on July 16, I spent approximately 20 minutes in a one-on-one meeting with the King. King Gyanendra began by passing his regards to President Bush and expressing thanks for the "invaluable" U.S.-provided development and insurgency-related assistance to Nepal, which he hoped would be continued or even increased. I responded that indeed the USG was looking at additional ways of supporting Nepal; in that context, however, it would be very important that credible claims of human rights abuses by the security forces be transparently and thoroughly investigated. The King agreed.

[1](#)3. (C) India and China were also being helpful, the King noted. Three years earlier, he recalled, he had warned India regarding the security threat the Maoists posed to both Nepal and India, but the Indians had dismissed his concerns. Now, though some in Nepal believed India was not doing enough on its side of the border, India had visibly increased its cooperation with and assistance to Nepal.

[1](#)4. (C) Turning to the domestic political scene, the King explained that he "stepped back" because he genuinely wished to be a constitutional monarch. Noting the numerous in-country trips he had taken in the past year, the King explained that he had hoped his visits to different parts of the country would spur development. However, perhaps because the parties pushed against his efforts, or because of the inefficiency and the inability of Nepali government services to follow in his wake, it had not worked. Nevertheless, he stepped back just the same: Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, shrewd enough about Nepali politics to "know how he has been used by those above him," had shown sufficient skill and wherewithal to put together a four-party coalition. I commended the King for bringing four of the five major legitimate political parties back into the governing process, and asked whether he thought Koirala could be convinced to join his Nepali Congress Party to the government. The King responded that Deuba was "running things now;" whether Koirala would join the coalition was a question for the Prime Minister. Meanwhile, the King thought Deuba was doing well, and only worried that Deuba sometimes appeared to be in too much of a rush to "fix things."

[1](#)5. (C) When I asked whether the time was ripe for negotiations, the King responded that it was very hard to tell. Negotiations before the Maoists were sincere and ready to make concessions would be a mistake, the King offered, and it was not clear whether the Maoists had reached that point.

[1](#)6. (C) The King stated he had a very positive relationship with my predecessor and frequently sought Ambassador Malinowski's advice. The King hoped that sort of close relationship could continue with me. To that end, the King stated that he would inform me of any planned major shifts in policy, and that I should feel free to contact him at any time.

[1](#)7. (C) COMMENT: King Gyanendra appeared bright, charming and genuinely appreciative of U.S. support. Gyanendra's political machinations over the past few years clearly contributed to the political instability which the Maoists have exploited. Still, he was not forced to reinstate Prime Minister Deuba; another palace appointed Panchayat-era Prime Minister could have easily been the choice. His decision is therefore a positive sign of his intent to see whether the political parties can resume governing. And while the King does not have all of the answers to ending Nepal's

insurgency, he at least appears to want to do right for
Nepal. END COMMENT.
MORIARTY